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### **Be Aware of Current Events**

#### **Being in ignorance of changes can come at a cost**

Casual question: "Did you see the news last night?"

Apathetic reply: "Never watch the news – it's always the same."

Well, that's probably true much of the time; but buried within reports of global conflict and governmental excuses for political shortcomings will be information that, if missed, could cause problems for some. We try to keep abreast of current events, just in case they apply to us personally. As well as early evening news reports, part of our morning routine is to check emails and items of interest on Yahoo. Quite often there is nothing life-changing in either, but occasionally something comes to light that may require our attention. It could be to do with finances or health, perhaps amendments to laws that are unlikely to affect us now, but might possibly down the track. Although not necessarily of immediate concern, any new developments are worth keeping an eye on.

Probably our main source of updated information is the 6 o'clock news. From what I've learned, however, many don't bother with it. Some claim it is too depressing: death and destruction; bickering politicians sniping at each other; then there are frequent reports of who's doing what in the global arena. And to be honest, the critics are quite right. The general consensus of opinion would tend to regard it all as useless information about places so far away from us as to have little consequence, so why give it the time of day? There are better things to watch like soapies, and reality TV shows; and, of course, for those with Netflix and the pay TV channels there are movies galore. Fiction particularly is far better than the real thing, and in the main these dramas are usually resolved satisfactorily by the time the closing credits roll; unlike the lives we lead.

Occasionally the news teams do come up with the odd tip which might be of benefit. Like, for instance, the fact that insurance companies are about to raise their premiums. Whether this affects home owners, motorists, or the general public's costs relating to health insurance, the increases can often be minimised by following the accompanying advice; provided reasonably speedy action is taken. The trouble is that in our busy world there never seems time to wade through the fine print of policy agreements; and shopping around for better deals is tedious for many. So the problem is ignored and the premiums are paid same as always, shrugging off any increases as par for the modern course. Had notice been taken, however, of the news report, or the letter that arrived in the post from the insurance company detailing changes, part of the impending increases at least might have been avoided. But that would mean reading and it's far easier to file the letter or just bin it. There are those, of course, who don't have insurance because they can't afford it, so none of this matters to them.

Health is a major issue for most and there is often advice going around that really needs to be considered. Paying a visit to medical professionals can be inconvenient, but a quick glimpse on the Internet is surely a good alternative – or is it? The odd heads-up on TV about a new drug that could soon be available may be exciting for long-term sufferers. Unfortunately the soon-to-be-available means sometime in the distant future, so it doesn't really apply right now. Anyway, what's on TV isn't the be-all and end-all; not when you've got a smart phone. You want to know the latest and a simple tap will tell you that; at least the influencer you go to can – and they know, surely? Or is their vlog more about their own image than whatever they are presenting?

Frequently, unsolicited information comes along, maybe on your phone or laptop. A total stranger is offering an investment opportunity you'd be a fool to ignore; or you've omitted to pay some tax or other that will see you prosecuted if you fail to settle it right away. To clear the matter up you just have to go to the link. But why would you take the risk? There are frequent warnings on the news of the latest scams going round and you know all about these... Oh, you don't? You rarely watch the news...! Are you one of the hundreds, thousands even, who get sucked into these scams simply because you adhere to the misconception that it will never happen to you?

As for the wider world, what does it matter if there are regions of it which are in conflict? Admittedly, these troubles may not be on your doorstep, but they cause repercussions for everyone. And those who take no notice of updates could be sorely disadvantaged by resulting shortages of fuel and other essentials that they simply can't be without. If you don't know what's soon to be unavailable you could miss the boat.

And did you catch the storm warning and the accompanying road weather alert, or the report of a bushfire approaching your town? You didn't!!? Oh dear. It might really be an idea to keep in touch with current events and how they affect you personally. After all, who else is going to look after number one?

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